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AUTHOR Pincus, J. David; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Using H. Dennis' (1974) five-factor communication climate construct framework as a predictor variable, a study investigated the relationship between perceptions of communication climate and job satisfaction of supervisory employees in the banking industry. A systematic random sample was drawn from 68 commercial banks in Orange County, California, during the late spring of 1985. Thirteen banks were selected for the study, and 137 supervisory personnel from those banks were surveyed (with a 71% response rate or 98 useable questionnaires). The questionnaire measured Dennis' five communication factors: (1) perceptions of superior-subordinate communication; (2) reliability of organization information; (3) supervisors' empathy for subordinates; (4) upward communication and influence; and (5) reliability of information from subordinates and peers. Job satisfaction questions examined compatibility with fellow employees, adequacy of immediate supervisor, satisfaction with their job as a whole, effectiveness of the organization, and satisfaction with economic rewards. The questionnaire was pre-tested among 30 supervisors at two banks in Orange County not included in the sample, and the minor changes recommended by the participants were incorporated. Results confirmed that positively perceived organizational communication is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction. Analysis also revealed a positive link between organizational trust and influence. A major contributor to supervisors' job satisfaction was their communication with top management and their ability to influence workplace decisions--not their communication with immediate supervisors. (Two tables of data and 61 references are appended.) (MM)

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INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND JOB SATISFACTION REVISITED: THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST AND INFLUENCE ON COMMERCIAL BANK SUPERVISORS

J. David Pincus, Ph.D.
Department of Business Communication
School of Business Administration
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA 90089-1421
213-743-6836

Janice E. Knipp, M.A.
Mitsubishi Bank
Garden Grove, CA

Robert E. Rayfield, Ph.D.
Department of Communications
California State University, Fullerton
Fullerton, CA 92634

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INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND JOB SATISFACTION REVISITED: THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST AND INFLUENCE ON COMMERCIAL BANK SUPERVISORS

INTRODUCTION

The critical importance of communication to an organization's effectiveness has long been established by scholars, ranging from Barnard (1938) to Redding (1979) to Ruch and Goodman (1983). Unfortunately, most organizational communication research over the past four decades has been primarily descriptive in nature (Grunig, 1973; Richetto, 1977). Further, many of the most prominent studies have used such widely diverse instruments and methodologies as to be non-comparable (Pincus and Rayfield, 1987).

Some major studies in the past decade, however, have developed useful theoretically based research or validated standard research tools. Dennis (1974) contributed such a tool for the conceptualization and measurement of communication climate, a construct increasingly attracting the attention of organizational communication researchers. Dennis defined communication climate as:

> a subjectively experienced quality of the internal environment of the organization; the concept embraces a general cluster of inferred predispositions, identifiable through reports of members' perceptions of messages and message-related events, occurring in the organization (p. 29).

The study reported here used Dennis' (1974) communication climate structure as the basis for investigating the relationship

between communication climate and job satisfaction among supervisors of commercial banks in southern California. This paper discusses the implications of the results of this research effort from both conceptual and methodological perspectives. First, prior literature on organizational and communication climates, and their relationship to job satisfaction, is reviewed. Second, the hypotheses that guided the study are forwarded. Third, the methodology is explained. Fourth, key results are presented. And finally, conceptual and practical implications of the findings are discussed, and several recommendations for future research are suggested.

ANALYSIS OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Organizational Climate

Before focusing on the concept of communication climate, the broader construct from which it emanated -- organizational climate -- should be examined and understood.

Organizational climate has been defined and operationalized in a variety of ways. Generally speaking, however, organizational climate has been perceived as "a summative variable representing the individual's filtering of various stimuli impinging on him from the organization" (Knipp, 1985, p. 11), which is "assumed to influence motivation and behavior" (Litwin and Stringer, 1968, p. 143).

Inherent within the multiplicity of organizational climate characterizations are various combinations of direct communication or communication-related dimensions. For example, Litwin and Stringer (1968) identified the following dimensions of

organizational climate: organizational structure, individual responsibility, warmth/support, rewards/punishment, conflict resolution, performance standards and organizational identity. In contrast, Taylor and Bowers pinpointed a different series of dimensions, which included human resources primacy, communication flow, motivational climate and upward influence. And Campbell et al. (1970) included individual autonomy and support from superior in their inventory of organizational climate dimensions.

However climate has been defined as a concept or operationalized as a variable, researchers have consistently attempted to understand and predict its effect on organizational members (Falcione and Werner, 1978). For example, in studies where climate was positioned as a dependent variable, perceptions of climate have been found to vary between types of employees (Litwin and Stringer, 1968), organizational levels (Porter and Lawler, 1965), and managers and assistant managers (Schneider and Bartlett, 1970). Where climate has been examined as an intervening variable, it has been linked to dependent variables, such as job satisfaction and job performance (Hellriegel and Slocum, 1974; Pritchard and Karasick, 1973). And as a predictor variable, organizational climate has been positively correlated with job satisfaction (Kaczka and Kirk, 1968; Cawsey, 1973) and job performance (Kaczka and Kirk, 1968).

Based on the thrust of organizational climate research, Campbell et al. (1970) argued the existence of "an inherent logic in the reasoning that the organization, as perceived by the individual, can exert influence over behavior" (pp. 385-386). A

significant contributor to organizational climate is the multidimensional variable referred to as communication climate, which has not been adequately isolated and examined (Lawler, Hall and Oldham, 1974), despite the fact that most organizational research instruments incorporate communication climate dimensions (Falcione and Werner, 1978).

Communication Climate

Communication climate has long been believed by researchers to contribute to organizational climate, and thus to measureable elements of management effectiveness (Likert, 1967). The concept has been variously defined as the pattern of how people communicate (Johnson, 1977), the degree to which individuals perceive organizational communication to be supportive (Schneider et al., 1976), and as a subjective experience identified through members' perceptions of organizational messages (Dennis, 1974). Regardless of the particular definition, it is generally agreed that each employee has a perception of the quality of the environment within his/her organization -- a perception constructed by personal evaluations of elements of communication within the organization. And, most researchers would agree, an important purpose of communication climate research is to be able to predict and influence organizational effectiveness. "Communication climate," wrote Ireland et al. in 1978, "must be viewed as having an intimate relationship with patterns of organizational success" (p. 9).

Research on the factors composing communication climate over the past two decades has been infrequent, but enlightening. One of the earlier efforts was Gibb's (1961) identification of

two communication climate types: the supportive/open climate, which facilitates effective message transmission and the defensive/closed climate, which impedes successful message transmission. A number of subsequent studies were conducted based on Gibb's work. Likert (1967) posited that the hierarchy above each work group forms a climate within which a lower level must function. He found that in the defensive/closed climate, where decisions are centralized at the top, motivation is low and communication is infrequent and distorted. In a 1968 study, De Charms found that individuals want to change their organizational environments to be more supportive/open. Seventeen years after Gibb's research, Ireland et al. (1978) used Gibb's typology as a framework for illustrating the effects of various management behaviors on shaping different aspects of communication climate.

Several other, more focused, attempts to define communication climate have been reported. Redding (1972) identified five dimensions of communication climate: supportiveness, participative decisionmaking, trust, openness/candor and emphasis on high performance goals. Building on Redding's work, Dennis (1974) pinpointed a somewhat varied set of five perceptual factors for supervisory personnel: superior-subordinate communication, quality and accuracy of downward communication, supervisor empathy with subordinates, quality and accuracy of upward communication, and information reliability. A number of other closely related communication climate typologies have surfaced over the years, such as Roberts and O'Reilly's (1974) 16-dimension climate measure, which incorporates both

communication and non-communication factors.

Thus, the concept of communication climate has been crafted and refined over time. Professionals and researchers alike seem to believe that employees who perceive the communication climate in their organizations in positive ways will likely develop positive perceptions toward their work and organizations. And evidence is emerging that management's actions can substantially influence employees' perceptions of communication climate (Kulhavy and Schwartz, 1981). Nevertheless, research to date presents an inadequate understanding of which communication actions by managers will most probably bring about desired results, such as greater employee job satisfaction.

Communication Climate and Job Satisfaction

Much communication climate-based research has focused on the relationship between various communication factors and job satisfaction, generally believed to be a desireable organizational objective. Job satisfaction, which has been the object of considerable organizational research, is the favorableness or unfavorableness with which employees view their work (Applebaum, 1979). As a research construct, however, job satisfaction has been operationalized in a multiplicity of ways.

Wanous and Lawler (1972) examined nine different operational definitions of job satisfaction, distinguishing between overall job satisfaction measures and satisfaction with particular facets of the job. More recently, Richmond and McCroskey (1979) outlined three conceptualizations of job satisfaction research: (1) a global or one-factor approach, which is a general response to one's work environment (e.g., Ewen et al., 1966); (2) a two-

factor theory comprised of motivators (e.g., recognition) that influence satisfaction, and hygiene factors (e.g., pay) that cause dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959); and (3) a multiple-factor approach in which each dimension represents a satisfaction-dissatisfaction continuum (e.g., Pincus, 1986; Wheeless et al., 1982; Falcione, 1977). Smith et al. (1969) first operationalized the multiple-factor approach. They isolated five dimensions of job satisfaction: supervision, the work itself, pay, promotion and co-workers. Their Job Description Index (JDI) has been widely employed and adapted to job satisfaction research.

In their meta-research perspective of the body of communication-job satisfaction research, Pincus and Rayfield (1987) concluded that, despite varying definitions, instruments and methodologies used in relevant research, "a positive, but complex relationship exists between employees' perceptions of various types of organizational communication and their perceived job satisfaction" (p. 27). An array of communication variables has been shown to be positively linked to job satisfaction, such as superior-subordinate communication (Pincus, 1986; Plunkett, 1982; Jablin, 1977), employee-centered leadership style (Richmond et al., 1983), information flow (Coan, 1984; Weatherford, 1982; Sussman, 1974), feedback (Pincus, 1986; Ivancevich and McMahon, 1982), and role perceptions (Schuler, 1979).

In studies where communication climate per se was related to job satisfaction, results have been mixed. While Roberts and O'Reilly (1974) and Muchinsky (1977) found significantly positive

results, Dennis' (1974) often cited study of insurance and automotive manufacturing supervisors reported only modestly positive and significant correlation results between each of five communication climate factors and job satisfaction. Only superior-subordinate communication correlated significantly with satisfaction with the "boss" and downward communication correlated significantly with overall satisfaction with the organization. Nevertheless, Dennis believed his limited significant findings suggested an important relationship between managerial communication and organizational effectiveness. Further, he was encouraged by the potential viability of his communication climate factor-structure for future research:

> It is important to re-emphasize that the communication climate factor-structures of the two contrasting organizations were found to be nearly identical. This finding . . . certainly suggests that the communication climate measure may indeed have generalizability beyond the present research (p. 54).

In a later study using Dennis' (1974) communication climate factors, Krivonos (1978) found among supervisors at two large manufacturing companies only slight support for the notion that intrinsically motivated individuals would perceive the communication climate as more open than those who are extrinsically motivated. The conclusion, then, is unavoidable: the viability of Dennis' communication climate construct and its relationship to organizational effectiveness measures, such as job satisfaction, remains unclear.

Hypotheses

This study, then, sought to clarify the communication climate-job satisfaction relationship using Dennis' (1974)

communication climate construct as the predictor variable. Confirmation of the existence of this relationship via experimental and field research, allowing isolation of key variables, can bolster theory-building efforts. In addition, such information can provide vital data to managers and supervisors on how to increase employees' job satisfaction.

Two hypotheses were generated to guide this study, one designed to confirm the existence of a positive relationship between organizational communication and job satisfaction and the other to investigate the varying degrees of influence of different communication factors. Hypothesis I stated:

> Perceptions of communication climate will be positively and significantly (<.05) correlated with job satisfaction.

This hypothesis was predicated on the largely consistent pattern of communication-job satisfaction research (see Pincus and Rayfield, 1987). However, this prediction takes on added importance in light of Dennis' (1974) and Krivonos' (1978) relatively weak results using Dennis' five-factor communication climate measure.

Hypothesis II stated:

> Perceptions of superior-subordinate communication will account for the greatest amount of variance in job satisfaction.

A growing body of research has strongly argued that an employee's communication relationship with his/her immediate supervisor may play the major role in predicting that employee's job satisfaction (see Jablin, 1977; Pincus, 1986; Falcione, 1977). Therefore, of Dennis' five communication factors (superior-subordinate communication, downward accuracy,

supervisor empathy, upward influence, information reliability), superior-subordinate communication was expected to be the strongest influence on job satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

This survey and analysis sought to validate Dennis' (1974) communication climate instrument and test the relationship between perceptions of communication climate and job satisfaction of supervisory employees in a field not previously examined, the banking industry. The Dennis model is particularly useful. It outlines communication climate as encompassing significant organizational people (superiors, subordinates, peers), significant organizational groups (management and work groups), as well as the organization-as-a-whole.

The banking industry is particularly interesting to investigate at this time. Recent deregulation has created an increased competitive marketplace for banks. As a result, many banks have undergone a flurry of bank closings, increased centralized control and a dwindling of middle management (Nadler, 1985). These industry disturbances have inevitably affected the communication environment within bank cultures. It should be useful to professionals and researchers in the communication and banking fields to better understand how these changes are impacting on communication climate, and subsequently job satisfaction. This study should be especially valuable to an industry which, despite its growing awareness of communication's importance, still has [illegible]ents that do not see it as a management function (Vinson, 1978).

Sample

A systematic random sample was drawn from commercial banks existing in Orange County, California, during the late spring of 1985. Of the 68 banks in existence, 13 were selected and all agreed to participate in the study. Among those banks, 137 supervisory personnel were identified and 98 of those subjects returned useable questionnaires, representing a 71 percent response rate.

Predictor Variable: Communication Climate

The predictor, or independent, variable for this study was perceptions of communication climate, as outlined in Dennis' (1974) model. It was slightly modified to control for response set by randomly reversing questions. In addition, several questions concerned with top management communication, based on those used by Pincus (1984), were added. The questionnaire was structured to measure perceptions of superior-subordinate communication (21 questions), reliability of organization information (12 questions, three of which related to top management), supervisors' empathy for subordinates (5 questions), upward communication and influence (5 questions), and reliability of information from subordinates and peers (2 questions). Possible responses were along a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," with "neutral" as the mid-point.

Criterion Variable: Job Satisfaction

The criterion, or dependent, variable was job satisfaction, based on Taylor and Bowers' (1972) instrument and used by Dennis

(1974). One question each examined: compatibility with fellow employees; adequacy of immediate supervisor; satisfaction with job as a whole; effectiveness of the organization; and satisfaction with economic rewards. Two questions addressed satisfaction with present and future progress within the organization. Possible responses were along a five-point Likert scale ranging from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied."

The questionnaire was pre-tested among 30 supervisors at two banks in Orange County not included in the sample. The minor changes recommended by the participants were incorporated.

Data Collection

Each subject was given a blank questionnaire accompanied by a cover letter explaining the identification of the researcher, guaranteeing confidentiality, outlining the purpose of the survey, and providing necessary instructions. Questionnaires were completed by individuals during work hours. In three cases, managers requested that participants complete them during pre-set on-site group sessions. All completed questionnaires were deposited in sealed drop boxes placed in each bank.

RESULTS

The analysis of data sought to explain the relationship between supervisors' perceptions of their communication climate and job satisfaction and to explore the viability of Dennis' (1974) five-factor communication climate construct framework. Factor analysis, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were employed to test the hypotheses.

Reliability of Instruments

Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the communication climate and job satisfaction scales. Both scales were found to be highly reliable, based on Carmines and Zeller's (1979) guideline that reliabilities for widely used scales should be near .80. The communication climate scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .93 and the job satisfaction scale was .79.

Factor Analysis: Comparison with Dennis (1974)

Factor analysis (principal factoring with iteration and varimax rotation) was used to compare the communication climate factors generated in this study with those derived by Dennis (1974). Results revealed partial replication of Dennis' factor loadings -- three of the five factor domains mirrored Dennis' findings, while two new factors were formed. These new factors might be accounted for by differences across industries or by changes in employees' values and communication needs since Dennis' study 11 years ago.

The three factors remaining similar to Dennis' findings were superior-subordinate communication, supervisor empathy with subordinates and information reliability. However, the items comprising Dennis' upward influence factor combined with some items of his downward accuracy factor to form a new factor, which we labeled "organizational trust and influence." These items reflected employees' concerns with their perceptions of their organization-as-a-whole and top management, and their ability to influence organizational decisions affecting the workplace.

A second new factor identified in this study, called

information satisfaction, drew strength from the remaining items in Dennis' downward accuracy factor. These items revealed employees' satisfaction with information about the organization and their immediate work environment. The following chart depicts the communication climate factors from both this and Dennis' (1974) studies.

Communication Climate Factors

Dennis' (1974)	Pincus, Knipp and Rayfield, 1985)
Superior-subordinate communication	Superior-subordinate communication
Downward accuracy	Organizational trust and influence
Supervisor empathy with subordinates	Supervisor empathy with subordinates
Upward influence	Information satisfaction
Information reliability	Information reliability

The two new factors identified in this study appear to reflect contemporary trends revealed by recent research efforts. The essence of the items forming these factors emphasizes the increasing importance of organizational members' desire for an opportunity to participate in and influence organization decisions (see meta-analytic review in Miller and Monge, 1986), and members' desire for more open, trusting communication with top management (Pincus and Rayfield, 1986).

This new set of communication climate factors -- superior-subordinate communication, organizational trust and influence, information satisfaction, supervisor empathy with subordinates

and information reliability -- was used as the basis for subsequent statistical analyses.

Correlation Analysis: Communication Climate and Job Satisfaction

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was performed to test the efficacy of Hypothesis I, which predicted that perceptions of communication climate will be positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction. Hypothesis I was, for the most part, supported. Four of the five communication climate factors were positively correlated with job satisfaction at $p < .05$; only supervisor empathy with subordinates was not statistically significant.

The strongest correlation between job satisfaction and the communication factors examined in this study was with organizational trust and influence (.55, $p = .001$). Similarly strong associations were also found with superior-subordinate communication (.46, $p = .001$) and information satisfaction (.35, $p = .001$). Table 1 contains complete results.

Interestingly, these strongly supportive results are substantially different from Dennis' (1974) findings. He reported extremely weak, non-significant relationships between the five communication climate factors and job satisfaction (see Table 1). He suggested that his disappointing findings might have been due to a deficiency in the criterion measure itself or the inherent weakness in one-time data collection studies. In order to further compare this study's results with Dennis', another correlation analysis using Dennis' 1974 factor loadings and job satisfaction scores of respondents in this sample was done. Results revealed that three of Dennis' factors correlated

positively and significantly with job satisfaction: downward accuracy (.51, p = .001), superior-subordinate communication (.46, p = .001) and upward influence (.47, p = .001). This finding may be attributable to the nature of the sample, the different industries under study, or may reflect more fundamental underlying changes in employees' preferences/expectations.

Not surprisingly, the superior-subordinate communication factor was positively and significantly related to job satisfaction, as prior studies have consistently shown (e.g., Jablin, 1979; Pincus and Rayfield, 1987). Somewhat less expected, however, was the strong relationship between job satisfaction and the downward accuracy and upward influence factors. Items from these factors combined to shape the new factor, organizational trust and influence, which was found to be the predominant influence in both correlation and multiple regression analyses (see next section). This seems to suggest that employees' perceptions of their ability to participate in meaningful two-way communication with top-level management may rival immediate supervisor communication as a meaningful predictor of job satisfaction.

In summary, Hypothesis I -- that perceptions of communication climate will be positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction -- was strongly supported via correlation analysis. More specifically, results indicated that employees' views of communication with their immediate supervisors and top managers, as well as their ability to participate in the organizational decisionmaking process, is

strongly associated with their work satisfaction.

Regression: The Influence of Superior-Subordinate Communication

Hypothesis II stated that perceptions of superior-subordinate communication will account for the greatest variance in job satisfaction. Because of the likelihood that the communication climate factors are highly correlated with each other, stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis. The stepwise form of multiple regression determines if the last-entered variable should be retained in the equation or eliminated because it is highly correlated with a subsequently entered variable (Green, 1978).

Overall, about 40 percent of the variance in overall job satisfaction was explained by the five factors comprising communication climate (r-square = .405, adjusted r-square = .371, p = .001). Hypothesis II was only partially supported. Contrary to predictions, the strongest contributor to job satisfaction was organizational trust and influence, which accounted for almost three-fourths of the variance (r-square = .287, p = .001). The second most influential factor was superior-subordinate communication, which combined additively with organizational trust and influence to explain most of the variance in overall job satisfaction (r-square = .377, p = .001). Table 2 contains complete results.

Although Hypothesis II was not confirmed completely, the multiple regression results reinforced the correlation analysis, which highlighted the powerful relationship of organizational trust and influence, and superior-subordinate communication, with job satisfaction. These results suggest that the influence of

employees' perceptions of communication with immediate supervisors on job satisfaction remains strong, as predicted in Hypothesis II. A slightly modified picture emerged in this study, however. A new factor, organizational trust and influence -- which encompasses employees' perceptions of top-level management's communication practices and employees' role in important organization decisions -- appears to also positively and definitively impact worker satisfaction, according to results in this study.

DISCUSSION

This study of 98 supervisory personnel from 68 commercial banking organizations examined the relationship among various organizational communication factors and job satisfaction. The results provided insights into the importance of employees' perceptions of the communication climate in their organizations on their job satisfaction. The following brief discussion highlights some of the implications of these findings and relates them to prior research efforts.

(1) Communication-Job Satisfaction Link. Results confirmed the long-held notion that positively perceived organizational communication is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction (Pincus and Rayfield, 1987; Downs, 1979). In this case, a five-factor communication climate construct, modeled after Dennis' (1974) factor structures, revealed strong support via correlation and multiple regression analyses for the existence of a definitive association between communication climate and job satisfaction.

On a micro-level, the data analysis revealed a substantially positive link between organizational trust and influence, a newly formed factor, and a strong tie with superior-subordinate communication, which was, based on prior research, hypothesized to be the most influential factor (Pincus, 1986; Jablin, 1979; Muchinsky, 1977). Moderately positive and significant relationships were also found between the information satisfaction and information reliability factors and job satisfaction.

(2) Influence of Top Management Communication. An especially interesting, consistent finding in this study was that the major contributor to supervisors' job satisfaction was their communication with top management and their ability to influence workplace decisions -- not their communication with immediate supervisors. While superior-subordinate communication was found to be a strong influence on employees' job satisfaction, it was not the most powerful influence, as was originally predicted.

In contrast, the communication factor that accounted for most of the explained variance in job satisfaction, organizational trust and influence, did not surface as an independent factor in Dennis' study (1974). This unexpected result may signal subtle shifts in employees' workplace values and motivations since Dennis' study 11 years earlier, as well as changes in what they expect from communication with management at different organizational levels. Indeed, recent studies have reported an increasingly significant influence of employees' perceptions of top management on job satisfaction and job

performance (Pincus and Rayfield, 1986; Petelle and Garthright-Petelle, 1985; Ruch and Goodman, 1983).

The emergence of the power of employees' views of upper-level management in explaining organizational effectiveness measures does not, as Pincus (1986) argues, "necessarily diminish the importance of the employee-immediate supervisor communication" (p. 414), but may suggest that employees today are more aware of and want to increase their active participation within the organizational system.

(3) Beyond the Superior-Subordinate Relationship. Results from this study, which are based on supervisory personnel only, suggest that as individuals rise in the organizational hierarchy and get closer to the top, their desire for communication with top management may increase. Concomitantly, the importance that supervisors' attach to communication with their immediate supervisors may drop off accordingly. For instance, in Pincus' (1986) study of hospital nurses, most of whom were not supervisors, despite the strong influence of perceptions of top management communication, immediate supervisor communication was nevertheless the most significant contributor to job satisfaction and job performance. In this study, superior-subordinate communication was, as anticipated, a substantial explanatory force, yet organizational trust and influence accounted for most of the explained variance in job satisfaction.

This finding might be accounted for by natural and normal differences between managers and non-managers. As organizational members assume more supervisory responsibilities, their self-perceptions, ambitions and general view of the organization may

change. Their need for direct supervision may lessen. Their desire to participate in decisions (Miller and Monge, 1986) that influence the organization and thereby impress their superiors may increase. Their management role may require that they receive more and have greater access to information about the organization-as-a-whole -- information that frequently emanates from top-level management.

The implication for organizational decisionmakers is that they must develop and implement more effective two-way communication mechanisms that allow supervisors to offer input and feedback regularly to top-level management. To deter supervisors' initiative in becoming more involved and feel greater ownership in the organizational system could severely reduce job satisfaction and performance.

(5) Bank Communication Strategies. Findings in this study may reflect some of the changes occurring within the banking industry in particular, and service industries in general, that could affect management's creation of the most appropriate organizational communication strategies. For example, deregulation of the banking industry has substantially altered the organizational structure and concerns of banks. Increasing empahsis on cost efficiency in a highly competitive marketplace has contributed to more frequent branch closings, an increase in centralization and a flatter organizational structure as middle managers become obsolete (Nadler, 1985). As a result, supervisors, located at far-flung branch offices and perhaps feeling increasingly isolated from their bank's headquarters,

seem to want top management to play a more active and substantive role in shaping the organization's communication climate. In this service-intensive industry, if bank personnel, both supervisors and employees, are not well informed and do not feel positive about their work, such negative attitudes can damage their regular contact with customers.

FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

As a one-shot study of supervisors at banks located in one metropolitan area in the U.S., results from this study can not be generalized widely. Nevertheless, this research effort uncovered a number of areas that demand further exploration:

(1) The factor structures comprising the communication climate construct differed somewhat from Dennis' (1974) original factor loadings. Are these factor variations due to differences across industries or more permanent differences in supervisors' communication needs? How stable are these factors over time? Only application of these instruments to other diverse populations can provide such answers.

(2) This study, as have several others recently, has shed light on the emerging importance of employees' communication with top management and employees' desire to take a more active role in workplace decisions. However, the number of studies that have investigated this area are relatively few. Clearly, more studies should be focused on the contribution of top management communication, and organizational trust and influence, in addition to the more traditional communication factors (e.g., superior-subordinate communication), to job satisfaction and job

performance.

(3) This study and Dennis' (1974) study incorporated supervisory personnel only. Based on some comparisons between these results and other studies of either non-supervisors or a mix of supervisors and non-supervisors, different communication factors may be most influential on job satisfaction. To more closely examine this question, studies with organizational members from different organizational levels are needed.

Table 1

Pearson Correlation Analysis:

Communication Climates and Job

Satisfaction, 1974 vs. 1988

Dennis (1974)		Pincus, Knipp & Rayfield (1988)	
Superior-Subordinate Communication	.02	.46 (p = .001)	Superior-Subordinate Communication
Downward Accuracy	-.02	.55 (p = .001)	Organizational Trust & Influence
Supervisor Empathy w/subordinates	.02	.12	Supervisor Empathy w/subordinates
Upward Influence	.05	.35 (p = .001)	Information Satisfaction
Information Reliability	.03	.27 (p = .004)	Information Reliability

Table 2

Stepwise Multiple Regression*:

Communication Climate Factors

And Job Satisfaction

Comm. Climate	Mult R	R-Square	Overall F	P-Value
Organizational Trust and Influence	.53	.29	36.65	.001
(and)				
Superior-Subordinate Communication	.61	.37	27.30	.001
(and)				
Information Satisfaction	.62	.39	18.85	.001
(and)				
Information Reliability	.62	.40	14.44	.001
(and)				
Supervisor Empathy with Subordinates	.63	.41	11.85	.001

*Due to high correlations among the variables, stepwise multiple regression was used because it considers each variable one at a time and determines its value to the equation additively.

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